

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of inserting a dialysis catheter into a patient comprising:
inserting a guidewire into the jugular vein of the patient through the superior vena cava, and into the inferior vena cava;
providing a trocar having a lumen and a dissecting tip;
inserting the trocar to enter an incision in the patient and to create a subcutaneous tissue tunnel;
threading the guidewire through the lumen of the trocar so the guidewire extends through the incision;
providing a dialysis catheter having first and second lumens;
removing the trocar; and
inserting the dialysis catheter over the guidewire through the incision and through the jugular vein and superior vena cava into the right atrium.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of temporarily inserting a stiffening member in the first lumen of the catheter to facilitate insertion of the catheter.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of removing the guidewire and leaving the catheter in position for at least several days to enable blood inflow through the first lumen and blood outflow through the second lumen to dialyze the patient's blood.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of leaving the catheter in place to enable blood outflow and inflow further comprises the step of enabling blood outflow through at least one opening in a wall of the catheter and enabling blood inflow through at least one opening in a distal portion of the catheter.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of inserting the stiffening member includes the steps of twisting the stiffening member and securing the stiffening member

to a proximal portion of the catheter to stretch the catheter to reduce at least a portion of the outside diameter of the catheter.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of inserting the dialysis catheter includes the step of forming a loop in the catheter prior to full insertion into the right atrium.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of inserting a dilator prior to the step of inserting the dialysis catheter.

8. A method of inserting a dialysis catheter into a patient comprising:
inserting a guidewire into the vein of a patient;
advancing a trocar through an incision in the patient to create a subcutaneous tissue tunnel;
retracting the guidewire through the subcutaneous tissue tunnel and incision utilizing the trocar;
removing the trocar;
inserting a dialysis catheter over the guidewire through the incision and subcutaneous tissue tunnel and through the vein of the patient; and
securing the dialysis catheter to the patient.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of retracting the guidewire comprises the step of inserting the guidewire through an opening in the trocar.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the opening extends longitudinally through the trocar and the step of inserting the guidewire comprises the step of threading the trocar over the guidewire such that the guidewire exits from a proximal portion of the trocar.

11. A method of inserting a dialysis catheter into a right atrium of a patient comprising:

providing a dialysis catheter having a lumen;
inserting a guidewire into the inferior vena cava of the patient;

inserting a stiffening member through the lumen in the catheter;
inserting a guidewire through the stiffening member and advancing the dialysis catheter and stiffening member over the guidewire into the vein and into the right atrium of the patient; and
removing the guidewire leaving the dialysis catheter in place for a period of time.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of inserting the stiffening member comprises the step of inserting the stiffening member such that a dilating distal tip of the stiffening member extends distally of the catheter.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of advancing the dialysis catheter subcutaneously over the guidewire through a tissue tunnel prior to the step of advancing the dialysis catheter into the vein.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of inserting a dilator to facilitate access to the right atrium.

15. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of inserting a tunneling member through an incision to create a tissue tunnel and to retrieve the guidewire.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising inserting the guidewire through a longitudinally extending opening formed in the tunneling member.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of advancing the dialysis catheter over the guidewire includes the step of forming a loop in the catheter corresponding to a loop formed in the guidewire prior to fully advancing the catheter into the right atrium.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of inserting a dilator prior to the step of inserting a dialysis catheter.